CHAPTER 6: TRAILS

Introduction

Trails were identified as a high priority by residents throughout the community planning process and in the survey results. The vision for Erie's trails system is to provide a linkage network connecting residents to destinations within and outside of the community. Trails provide off-road linkages for all types of non-motorized travel within and between the following: neighborhoods, businesses, jobs and employment centers, community services, future mass transit stops, parks and open space, and publicly accessible open space and park areas. In addition, trails serve the following functions for the Town's residents:

- Promote health and physical fitness.
- Provide leisure opportunities.
- Promote stress reduction.
- Increase awareness, understanding, and appreciation of open space values and functions.

Policy 1.3 in the Open Space chapter of the *Erie Comprehensive Plan* identifies the following corridors as key elements of the open space and trail network: Coal and Boulder Creeks, along with their tributary drainage channels and the many irrigation ditches (Lower Boulder, FRICO, and Community Ditch).

Trail Inventory & Types

The recreational trail system provides a community-wide off-road linkage network that connects major

destinations and provides opportunities for trail loops with areas of interest along the route. See *Resource Map B: Existing Park, Open Space & Trail System* and its associated quadrant maps for locations of existing trails within Erie in *Appendix 1*.

The trail system in Erie includes the following types of trails.

- Spine Trails consist of a wide concrete trail with an attached crusher fines trail and, whenever possible, are the primary off-road connection between neighborhoods and major activity centers (such as the Erie Community Center, Erie Community Library, Old Town, commercial areas, schools, and parks) and to regional trails.
- Local Trails consist of a concrete trail within neighborhoods to form secondary connections to other residences, schools, businesses, and the spine trail.
- Primitive Trails consist of a stabilized crusher fines trail within open space or rural areas where frequency of use is low and a more natural experience is desired.

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Together, these make up an overall recreational trail system to meet the needs of the residents of Erie. While the trail system in this *Master Plan* focuses on off-road recreational trails, it should be noted that the Town of Erie *Transportation Master Plan* identifies on-road bike lanes for some road types. As part of the overall trail system, connections between off-road recreational trails and onroad bike lanes should be made, when applicable. It is likely that some sections of sidewalks along roads may be considered part of the Town's trail network as they serve to meet connectivity needs where other options are limited or non-existent. In discussions with developers, the Town should encourage establishing a specific tract outside the road right-of-way when "sidewalks" need to be used to make trail connections. Those tracts can be designed to create a different landscape and user experience that is more trail-like than a basic sidewalk.

Alternative Providers

In addition to the trails provided by the Erie Parks & Recreation Department, the Erie Public Works Department along with other municipalities, counties, and HOAs or Metro Districts provide trails either within the Town or to the edge of its planning area. These trails provide a service to Erie residents with the Town or as alternative ways to access neighboring communities, activity centers, parks, natural areas, and open space.

The Town of Erie *Transportation Master Plan* (2008) identifies roadway cross sections that incorporate on-street bike lanes and off-street pedestrian paths or sidewalks. The Erie Public Works Department is responsible for the street sidewalks and on-street bike lanes identified in the *Transportation Master Plan*. These alternative connections can function as recreational links to activity centers and are a vital component of the overall trail network.

It is important for Erie to work with area county and municipal agencies to plan for the regional trail system. Weld County and Boulder County may provide trail connections to and trails within the Erie planning area in the future. These potential alignments and connection points include the Union Pacific Rail Trail and the Coal Creek/Rock Creek Trail. In addition, trails in the adjacent communities of the City of Lafayette and the City of Broomfield can connect to the Town of Erie's spine and local trails and provide connectivity between municipalities. The St. Vrain Legacy Trail can also provide regional connectivity to Erie in the future as it expands south from the City of Longmont. The Town of Erie should coordinate planning efforts for regional trails with Boulder County, Weld County, the City of Lafayette, the City of Broomfield, the Town of Dacono, the Town of Frederick, and other regional trails and open space organizations.

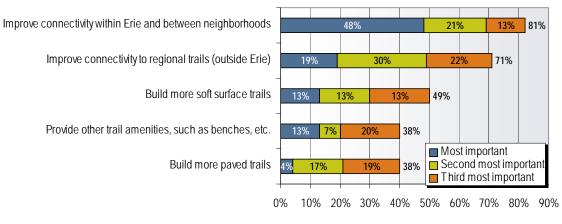
Note: Two active landfills currently exist within the Town limits. Although landfills are private property, they provide the potential for future trails or passive recreation. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment governs the closure of landfills. As the landfills in Erie close, the Town should look for potential partnering opportunities to provide for trails or passive recreation areas if possible.

Survey & Other Stakeholder Input

Trails consistently rated highly throughout the community survey. Following are key trail findings from survey.

- Town trails had the highest use (43 times per year) of all parks and recreation facilities.
- Town trails rated the highest in importance of parks and recreation amenities.
- When asked what other recreation facilities they use for recreation facilities and programs, the highest response was trails outside of the Town
- Connectivity of trails rated as the top priority for improvement out of a list of parks and recreation facilities and services, followed by number of trails. Trail maintenance rated as the fourth priority.
- Trail connectivity within Erie and between neighborhoods was the highest priority out of a list of trail categories as shown in **Figure 10**.

Figure 10: Most Important Aspects of Trails (2008 Community Survey)



Percent Responding

- Soft surface trails rated as the top priority of outdoor facilities to add, expand, or improve, followed by paved trails.
- Trails also ranked as the top priority when were respondents were asked: "If you were responsible for budgeting \$100 of Department funds for new development or park improvement projects, how would you spend it?" Respondents distributed the greatest share to additional trails and trail connections (29%).
- Sixty percent of respondents rated their ability to ride their bike to facilities or programs as "excellent," while 45 percent rated their ability to walk as "excellent" (34% rated walking access as "poor").
- Many survey write-in comments expressed support for expanding and connecting trails in Erie (e.g. safe, trail connections to neighborhoods and the Erie Community Center and library) and to surrounding communities (e.g. Boulder and Lafayette). Other trail comments included better trail signage, lighting, and trail maintenance (e.g. goat head control).

Trails were also identified as a strength as well as an area of improvement from community input from public meetings and focus groups. Trail connectivity within Erie and to surrounding communities was a key theme. Expanding partnerships with other communities to promote regional trail connectivity was identified as an opportunity for the Town to pursue.

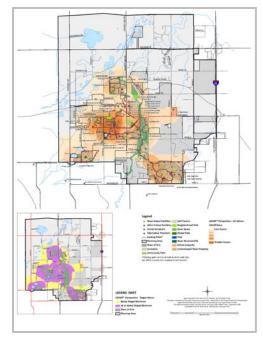
Demographics, Trends, & Benchmarking

A summary of relevant demographics, trends and benchmarking findings and how they impact policy decisions and recommendations for trails are reported here. More detailed information and source information can be located in the *Findings Report* provided separately to the Town.

- The Town of Erie has a high population of residents in the Generation X category (currently 29-44 years old.) This age group and its families desire individual activities such as biking and running activities that trails support. Safe, off-road recreational trails are especially desirable for families with young children.
- The population in Erie is projected to increase at a high rate (56.8%) by 2015, highlighting the importance of developing trail connections to these new developments.
- Trails that provide access to natural areas and open space create opportunities for nature hiking and self-guided nature trails. These nature-based activities are growing trends, nationally as well as locally. Erie does not currently offer much nature-based programming or facilities, presenting an opportunity for future program expansion efforts.
- Trails, parks, and playgrounds are among the five most important community amenities
 considered when selecting a home (according to a 2002 survey of homebuyers conducted by
 the National Association of Home Builders and the National Association of Realtors) an
 important consideration for Erie in efforts to attract homebuyers.
- The top three active outdoor recreation activities in terms of participation are wildlife watching, bicycle-based, and trail-based, according to the Outdoor Industry Association, all appropriate for trail uses.
- There is a national trend to plan for "complete streets" designed for safe, comfortable, and convenient travel for all users (i.e. pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transport users). The *Erie Transportation Master Plan* provides standards for off-street paths/bikeways.
- Benchmarking data collected specifically for the purposes of this *Master Plan* from comparable Colorado agencies including: Boulder, Brighton, Broomfield, Lafayette, Longmont, and Windsor shows that Erie ranks at the midpoint in miles of agency-maintained trails per 1,000 persons. With funding from the Trails and Open Space Fund specifically designated for trail construction, Erie is in a strong position to respond to the high importance of adding trails and improving trail connectivity as identified in the community survey and stakeholder input.

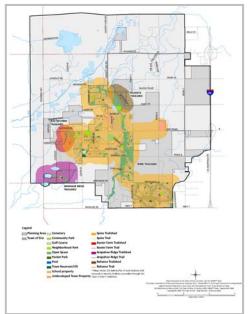
Level of Service Analysis

Perspective C: Neighborhood Access to Trails shows how the Town provides trail service at a neighborhood level. This map is shown as a thumbnail to the right for illustrative purposes. The larger map is found at the end of this chapter. Neighborhood access to trail service is defined as having trails within walking distance (one-third mile radius) from your home. Several types of trails are shown including linear trails along open space or creek corridors, loop walks within parks, and designated off-street trails along road corridors. In the inset map, purple indicates areas where trail service is at or above a determined level of service target. Yellow indicates areas where service is provided but is below the target level.



Overall, Erie has a fairly even distribution of trail service within its neighborhoods and the majority of residents

have neighborhood access to trails. A high level of trails service is located along the Coal Creek corridor and open space where it runs through newer developments. As Coal Creek travels north through the older downtown core of Erie, trail service is adequate, but relatively limited. The highest concentration of service is located in the residential developments west of the Erie Community Center and to the north and south of Erie Parkway.



A second analysis map shows connectivity between parks, open space, facilities, and regional trails through the Town's trail network. **Resource Map E: Trailsheds – Trail** Access to Community Facilities is shown to the left as a thumbnail for illustrative purposes. A larger version of the map may be found at the end of this chapter. A trailshed is defined as an area that lies within one-third of a mile, or a 10 minute walk, of a continuous length of trail. Further, an individual at any location (such as park, school, residence, or commercial area) within a single trailshed can access any other location within the same trailshed via the trail without traveling more than one-third of a mile to or from the trail. The Trailshed map shows gaps of connectivity between one segment of the trail network and another segment (segments are illustrated with different colors). The Trailshed map also shows where Erie can tie into other agencies' regional trail alignments such as Boulder County

regional trails, the Rock Creek/ Coal Creek Trail, the St. Vrain Legacy Trail, and the Colorado Front Range Trail. The facilities accessible within each trailshed are shown in **Table 8**.

As the Town constructs trail connections between trailsheds, the amenities and facilities available to a user on that trail will increase as those two trailsheds connect and become one. For instance, if a connection was made between the Spine Trailshed and the Arapahoe Ridge Trailshed, the number of schools available to Arapahoe Ridge via trails would increase from zero (0) to seven (7) and the number of reservoirs accessible to the Spine Trailshed would increase from one (1) to three (3). Trails that most benefit the connectivity between trailsheds are placed near the top of the priority list for trail construction later in this chapter.

Table 8: Trailsheds: Facilities Accessible through Erie's Trail Network

Trailsheds: Facilities and Parks accesible through the Town of Erie's trail network

	Community	Neighb orhood						Town	Golf			
TRAILSHED	Park	Park	Pocket Park	Open Space	Reservoir	School	Pool	Facility	Course	Other	TOTAL	Components
Spine	1	8	43	19	1	7	4	7	1	5	96	330.5
Baxter Farm				2						0	2	3
Arapahoe Ridge		1	1	1	2		1			0	6	20
Northridge		1		2						1	4	5
Outside				1				2		0	3	11

^{*} Some facilities may fall within multiple trailsheds. Sums of facilities and components may exceed actual quantities.

Policy Framework for Trails

Several Town documents provide context and guidance for the development and management of trails. The *Erie Comprehensive Plan* goals and policies for trails as shown in Chapter Two of this *Master Plan* provide the policy framework for trails. The *Municipal Code, Title 10* addresses open space and trail dedications and fees-in-lieu, but provides little detail related to trail standards. The *Transportation Master Plan*, guided by the goals and policies identified in the *Erie Comprehensive Plan* (Chapter 11: Transportation and Mobility), provides design standards for on-street bike lanes for collector streets and off-street paths and/or bikeways for new and improved roads. In addition, the *2005 Trail Connectivity Report* prepared by the Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB), provides potential trail connections for consideration by the Town. All of these documents inform this *Master Plan*. It should also be noted that the Trails and Natural Areas Fund provides dedicated funding for the construction of trails and that the dedicated property tax that supports this fund subsides in 2014.

Trail Dedication Requirements

Trail dedication from a developer or land owner to the Town will follow the dedication requirements of Open Space as detailed in Chapter 5 in accordance with the *Municipal Code, Title 10*. The Town will not accept dedication of a trail itself, but rather the property on which the trail is located and in turn the trail and any other improvements located on the parcel. In most cases, local trails and primitive trails will not be dedicated to the Town but owned and maintained by the HOA or Metro District. In situations where the Town does accept local trail and primitive trail dedication, the dedication requirements will follow those of Open Space.

All spine trails, local trails, and primitive trails located within public right-of-way as platted in a new subdivision will be constructed by the developer.

Resource Map C: Parks and Recreational Trails Recommendations shows existing spine trails and identifies potential alignments for future spine trails. As properties are designed for subdivision or development, this recommendations map should be used to evaluate if future spine trail alignments are located on or adjacent to the property. If a future spine trail alignment intersects the property, the developer will incorporate the trail design into the plan and connect it to existing spine trails in adjacent properties and stub it to future spine trail alignments at the property boundary. Local trails within the developing property shall provide connections to the spine trail.

Ownership, Design & Construction, Maintenance/Replacement Options

Spine Trails

Ownership and Maintenance/Replacement

Spine trails in many cases will be built by the developer when aligned through the property of a new subdivision. If the trail is located on property that is not dedicated to the Town, the development will designate a public access easement on the parcel through which the trail is located and the Town will assume long-term maintenance of all spine trails. Maintenance includes weed control, mowing trail edges, refreshing crusher fines, snow removal, sweeping, concrete repairs as needed, and safety inspections. The development may own and maintain, most likely through a Homeowners Association or Metro District, the open space, outparcel, or tract on which the trail is located, however, the Town will maintain all spine trails.

In some cases, spine trails may be constructed on Town property, right-of-way, or an easement. In all cases, the Town will maintain the spine trail.

Design and Construction

The developer will design and construct the spine trail per the Town's *Municipal Code, Title 10* and the *Design Standards* identified below in cases where the trail is located within a new development. In cases where the Town acquires property, right-of-way, or an easement for spine trail alignments, the Town is responsible for its design and construction.

Local Trails

Ownership and Maintenance/Replacement

Local Trails will be built by the developer when aligned through the property of a new subdivision. The development will own and maintain, through a Homeowners Association or Metro District, the open space, outparcel, or tract on which the local trail is located. The development will designate a public access easement on the parcel through which the trail is located.

In cases where the Town of Erie builds a local trail within Town-owned and maintained public open space or other town properties, the Town will maintain the trail and replace sections as necessary.

Design and Construction

The developer or Town will design and construct the local trail per the *Municipal Code, Title 10* and the *Design Standards* identified below.

Primitive Trails

Ownership and Maintenance/Replacement

Primitive Trails will be built by the developer when aligned through the property of a new subdivision. The development will own and maintain, most likely through a Homeowners Association or Metro District, the open space, outparcel, or tract on which the local trail is located. All properties which contain a primitive trail will be designated with a public access easement. In cases where the Town of Erie builds a primitive trail within public open space or town properties, the Town will maintain the trail and replace sections as necessary.

Design and Construction

If permitted by the Town to include a primitive trail in a development, the developer will design and construct the primitive trail per the Town's *Municipal Code*, *Title 10* and the *Design Standards* identified below. For Town-owned properties or parcels on which the Town has acquired an easement, Erie will be responsible for the design and construction of the primitive trail.

Note: Chapter 7 – Administration and Management of this **Master Plan** addresses key issues and recommendations related to the maintenance of parks, open space, and trails.

Trail Classifications & Design Standards

As stated in the *Erie Comprehensive Plan*, the Town will use the following criteria when evaluating potential trail facilities.

- Location To the extent possible, trails should be located, configured, and set back from natural creeks or water bodies so that recreational use will not significantly impact native plant and animal habitat.
- Alignment Trails should be generally sinuous in nature, avoiding overly long and straight runs greater than 300 feet.
- Width Spaces used to accommodate trails should generally be no less than three (3) times
 the width of the trail and shall accommodate development of Americans with Disabilities
 Act (ADA) compliant trails.

The location, intended service area, appropriate activities, and design for each trail classification are further detailed below. The Town has final determination on trail classification within new developments, the location of each trail type, and any variances to these standards. This section concludes with details of additional amenities that strengthen the trail network including trailheads, way sides, and signage.

Types

Spine Trails

Location & Service Area

The backbone of the trails system is the **spine trail network.** It should provide connectivity to major activity centers including community parks, Coal Creek open space, public schools, Old Town, and employment and commercial centers. Spine trails should follow routes along rivers, streams, ditches, ridges, or other features with scenic or recreational value whenever possible to form the basic template for the network. They may also parallel arterial or other streets if properly designed to provide an enjoyable recreational experience in the absence of these corridors. A choice of lengths and circuits is desirable. It is desired for the user to experience a variety of views, landscapes, shade, and amenities along the way, and ideally to travel a circuit and return to his or her starting point without having to backtrack. Spine trails should be located in open space corridors, when possible, to completely separate trails from roadways and minimize street crossings.

Spine trails should be located away from nuisance areas including above ground oil and gas facilities, pipelines, dangerous ditches, steep slopes, and mining areas that include tailings and shafts.

The approximate location of spine trail alignments is shown in *Resource Map C: Parks and Recreational Trails Recommendations* (located at the end of this chapter). Only spine trails are illustrated in this map. Local trails and primitive trails are more numerous and locations will be determined at the time of development. Spine trails were designed to create key connections between all Town neighborhoods, key activity centers, and regional trails. The alignments shown on *Resource Map C: Parks and Recreational Trails Recommendations* are intended to indicate the overall concepts of primary connectivity. Location of trails is general in nature on the map and is subject to final development plans. Specific alignments and locations should be determined according to several criteria. These include the availability of suitable right-of-way for the trail and the occurrence of conflicts with streets or other impediments to construction and safety.

Activities

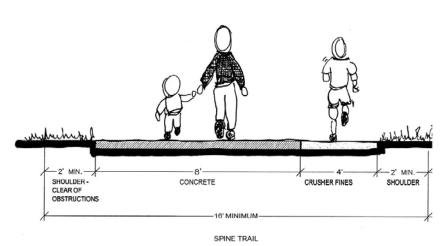
Spine trails are appropriate for pedestrians, joggers, bicyclists, strollers, roller bladers, and skateboarders. All spine trails shall be fully accessible and perform to ADA standards.



Design

Figure 11: Spine Trail Cross-Section

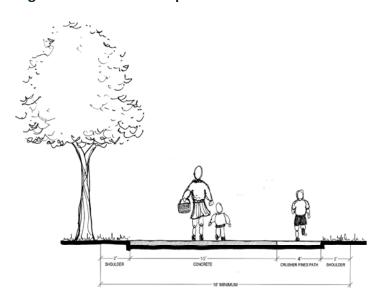
A cross-section for the spine trail is shown in **Figure 11**. It includes an 8-foot wide concrete section suitable for wheeled vehicles including strollers, bikes, and skates. An attached 4-foot soft surface of crusher fines provides a place for runners and pedestrians who want to stay out of the path of faster-moving cyclists or skater/bladers. A mower width shoulder on both sides should be kept clear of obstructions to provide a safety zone. All shoulders should have a



maximum 1:6 slope. Wider shoulders are recommended to provide clearance from trees, poles, walls, fences, and guardrails or other lateral obstructions. Where the path is next to a steep (1:3 or more) drop-off, a 5-foot separation between the path and the top of the embankment is recommended. The slopes across the travel surface of the path should not exceed two percent (2%). Along the direction of travel, slopes should not exceed five percent (5%) in order to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

An alternative to the 8'+4' main cross-section described above is shown in **Figure 12**. It consists of a single 10-foot width or wider paved trail with mower width shoulders on either side. This is useful when a high volume of bikes and other wheeled travelers are expected, or when the trail needs to accommodate service vehicles. In such a case, a 4-foot wide soft trail adjacent to one side is still recommended.

Figure 12: Alternative Spine Trail Cross Section



The trail configurations described above dictate a minimum of 22-feet of horizontal space needed to fit the trail's cross-section. Additional space will be needed to allow for the trail to be graded and to meet existing grades at the corridor's edge and to fit around existing trees or other obstructions. The amount of additional space needed will increase with the steepness of the terrain and the density of existing vegetation or other obstructions. Providing adequate separation from roadways and other adjacent hazards may also dictate a wider corridor. Space for directional signs, trailside benches, and other amenities should also be taken into account.

A minimum corridor width of 30-feet is recommended in order to account for the variables listed above, and a corridor width of at least 40-feet is recommended whenever possible. This corridor can be an easement or right-of-way, but the entire corridor width must be available for trail purposes.

Spine trails should be designed to minimize crossings with streets, driveways, and other hazards. Grade separated crossings are recommended whenever possible. On-grade crossings should be clearly marked with caution signs for motorists, crosswalks on the street that is to be crossed, and stop signs on the trail where it crosses a street. Locating on-grade crossings at intersections, especially signalized ones, is preferred to mid-block crossings unless a pedestrian signal or other accommodations can be made.

Local Trails

Location & Service Area

Local Trails are the veins of the trail network. They connect neighborhoods, schools, parks and commercial areas to each other and to the spine trails. Local trails should be located within open space corridors, linear tracts, and parks.

Local trails are not shown in the *Parks and Recreational Trail Recommendations Map*, but are equally important to provide secondary connections from residences, schools, businesses, and public places to the spine trails. Local trails need to be designed into all new developments, and their location and form will depend upon specific conditions on a case-by-case basis. All new developments should be required to provide adequate local trails across their property to connect to any spine trails and serve areas within one-third of a mile of any given point within the development.

Local trails should be located away from nuisance areas including above ground oil and gas facilities, pipelines, dangerous ditches, steep slopes, and mining areas that include tailings and shafts.

Activities

Local trails are appropriate for pedestrians, joggers, bicyclists, strollers, roller bladers, and skateboarders. All local trails shall be fully accessible and perform to ADA standards.

Design

The width and surface of these trails can vary according to the expected type and amount of traffic. At a minimum, these trails should be off-street multi-use paths and should meet ADA requirements. In some cases, local trails will need to meet the same standards for width and surface as the spine trail to which they connect. In other cases, local trails should have a minimum six-foot width of paved concrete.

In certain sections of the community, low-traffic streets or existing sidewalks might serve as secondary connections to the spine trails if wide enough and if designed to minimize conflicts with streets and driveways. While not meeting AASHTO standards for *bike* trails, these can provide safe access for pedestrians and others to the multi-use spine trails. Such routes should not be signed or marked as bike paths unless they are safe for such use, according to AASHTO standards. Streets adjacent to these routes may be marked with signage to warn motorists to watch for people using the route.

Primitive Trails

Location & Service Area

Primitive Trails should also be a part of the recreational trail system. These are appropriate within open space lands or other situations where traffic is low or the goal is to provide a more natural experience. Primitive trails should be kept away from steep slopes and sensitive natural areas. Proximity to other potential nuisances should be evaluated by staff on a case by case basis. There is no designated service area for this type of trail.

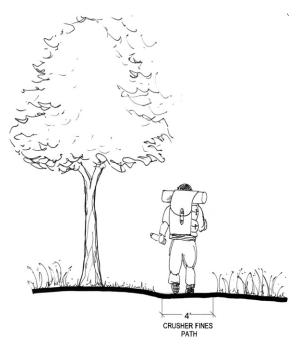
Activities

Primitive trails are appropriate for pedestrians, joggers, and in limited cases, bikes.

Design

The cross-section for this type of trail is shown in **Figure 13**. It consists of crusher fines, with improvements made for trail stabilization and erosion control. This can include water bars, culverts, steps, or other elements. The minimum width of a typical primitive trail shall be four feet. Adjacent slopes, grades, and separations shall comply with those described under the spine trail section. While not required in all cases, at least some primitive trails should be designed with slopes and surfacing to allow for use by wheelchair occupants who desire and are able to handle a challenge that is beyond the standards of ADA, yet not beyond the capabilities of an athletic wheelchair operator.

Figure 13: Primitive Trail Cross Section



Amenities

Trailheads, waysides, and signage are ancillary features that enhance the safety and enjoyment of the trail system. Trailheads provide access to spine trails from neighborhoods, parks, and the street network. Waysides are places along trails where travelers can stop to enjoy the shade or a pleasant view, or to read an interpretive sign. Signage provides trail identification, wayfinding, and interpretation while accessing and traveling sections of trail.

Trailheads

Trailheads are the interface between spine trails and the Town's transportation system. Trailheads should be provided at points where several primary routes converge and in places where easy access from streets to a parking area can be created. An adequate number of parking spaces should be provided to serve the projected use of the trailhead. Other features that can be provided include an information kiosk with a trails map posted on it and trash receptacles. Benches and shade should also be provided. All of these features should be selected for consistency of materials, colors, and form. Trailheads should also be provided for access to rivers and streams.

Trailheads should occur where roads intersect primary trails and a suitable pull-out or curb cuts can be attained, especially in rural areas. Safe entry and exit for cars is a primary concern. Some trailheads may consist of little more than a safe parking space or two, with appropriate signage. In some locations, greater use may be expected and additional improvements such as trash bins and toilets may be necessary. Portable toilets in a permanent enclosure work well in this situation. Permanent structures of any type should maintain a look and quality that fits with the overall character of Erie's parks system and that can adequately meet the maintenance requirements of the Town.

Waysides

Waysides are places along trails where travelers can stop to enjoy the shade or a pleasant view or to read an interpretive sign. Waysides should be provided at places that offer these characteristics, or at least every one-half (½) mile along the trail. Benches and/or picnic tables should be provided at waysides. Parks or other features along the trail can serve as waysides if properly designed and connected to the trail.

Signage

Trails within the system should be marked with consistent signage to identify the trail, help users find their way along the trail, and provide regulatory information on allowable uses, trail courtesy, etc. Other types of signs include identification signs for trailheads and interpretive signs. All signs should be consistent in their materials, colors, and graphics. The Town's logo should be included on all signs to clearly identify the trails as part of the Town's trail system.

Protection & Restoration Guidelines for Trail Construction

Locating trails along drainage ways offers an opportunity to bring people into some of the Town's most scenic and attractive natural areas like Coal Creek, Boulder Creek, and man-made opportunities provided by ditches and subsidiaries. However, care must be taken in selecting the exact alignment and configuration of trails in order to protect the scenic and environmental resources found within these corridors. The following is a list of protection and restoration guidelines for trail construction.

Ensure that trail routing avoids the most valuable habitat and, in general, protects wildlife habitat and plant cover as much as possible.

Route trails around, rather than through, the highest value habitats. Avoid putting trails near critical wetland or breeding habitats, and consciously choose to route trails away from such areas. Allow trails to touch riparian habitats briefly, if appropriate, rather than to continuously intrude into them. Opportunities for wildlife viewing should be considered when appropriate.

Practice a knowledge-based, minimal disturbance trail building protocol to avoid disturbing native vegetation and creating an environment for noxious weeds.

Unless the area is already heavily disturbed and full of invasive plants, disturb as little vegetation as possible in construction activities. Bare soil creates a haven for non-native, invasive plant species. Protect and preserve native trees, shrubs, forbs, and grasses as it is far easier to maintain these through management than to attempt to restore them. Know and observe critical distances to protect nesting areas, particularly of birds of prey.

Protect and restore existing features affected by trail construction and improve degraded areas along the trail corridor as part of implementing the trail system.

All construction associated with trails should be sensitive to the natural resources and other features that make using the trail an enjoyable experience. This includes protecting and restoring the landscape as well as historic and cultural features. Construction should strive to preserve standing dead trees (for raptor habitat) by routing trails around them. Screening should be used to reduce the visual impacts of trails in natural areas. When disturbance of natural areas during construction of the trail is unavoidable, this can be used as an opportunity to enhance or improve upon the existing condition in the restoration of the area.

Preserve standing dead trees that provide raptor habitat and route trails around them, maintaining adequate buffers according best management practices for raptor habitats.

Trail Priorities

This *Master Plan* acknowledges several future trails that have been identified by the Town as important. Trails that create key connections between separate trailsheds and from spine trails to the Erie Community Park are valued as high priorities as well as connections to Coal Creek Park, the downtown area, and connections to the regional trail network.

The Town should maintain awareness of significant grant opportunities to supplement the Trails and Open Space Fund to enable completion of key trail segments over time. The annual CIP budget process should be used as a time to assess and reprioritize trail construction projects, seeking input from OSTAB in the process. The annual CIP budget process should also reflect the trail projects and priorities submitted to Boulder County in its annual request process. Reference and update *Resource Map C: Parks and Recreational Trails Recommendations* on an annual basis.

Town staff should refer developers to Resource Map C and seek cooperation with constructing key connections through future developments as an opportunity. Table 9 below reflects trail alignments where the Town is largely responsible for acquiring the land and designing and constructing the trail. Table 10 lists those spine trail connections that will most likely be aligned through a development process and constructed by the developer.

Table 9: Recommended Key Trail Connections (2009)

RECOMMENDATION	LINEAL FEET OF TRAIL			
	(approximate)			
Trail Connection/Segment	Length			
Coal Creek Trail - Erie Parkway to				
Cheesman St.	2,200 LF			
Coal Creek Trail Extension - Cheesman				
Street Bridge to Reliance Park	2,000 LF			
Coal Creek Trail - Vista Parkway to				
Highway 7 (Rock Creek/Coal Creek Trail)	10,430 LF			
Trail Connector from northern edge of Erie				
Community Park to drainage channel	1,170 LF			
Erie Commons to Erie Community Park	600 LF			
Coal Creek Trail Realignment and				
Pedestrian Bridge Relocation at Erie	l			
Parkway	NA			
Coal Creek Trail Extension - Erie Commons				
to edge of Vista Pointe Open Space	1,760 LF			
Coal Creek Trail Extension - Reliance Park				
to County Line Road	4,400 LF			
Coal Creek Trail Extension - County Line				
Road to Kenosha Road via Erie Village	NA			
Coal Creek Trail Extension - Kenosha Road				
to Boulder Creek	3,520 LF			
Regional Trail - Creekside to Highway 287				
via union Pacific Rail Line*	11,880 LF			
Arapahoe Road Crossing from Arapahoe				
Ridge to the City of Lafayette	NA			
Kenosha Road Pedestrian Connector	NA			
* Constructed in segments by developers an	d segments			
by Tourn of Eric and Douldon County				

by Town of Erie and Boulder County.

Future trail connections are also anticipated in the following subdivisions:

- Bridgewater (High School to Coal Creek).
- Flatiron Meadows (connecting Arapahoe Ridge to Baxter Farms).
- Morgan Hill.

Table 10: Spine Trail Priorities - Private

TRAIL CONNECTION/SEGMENT	LINEAL FEET OF TRAIL
Baxter Farms to Candlelight Ridge (Candlelight Estates)	1,080 LF
Erie Commons to Coal Creek via Union Pacific Rail Line	1,400 LF
Arapahoe Ridge to Orchard Glen Trail (Flatiron Meadows)	5,600 LF
Coal Creek Trail Extension - Western Edge of Vista Pointe Open Space to Vista Parkway	1,760 LF
Erie High School to Coal Creek	9,025 LF





Recommendations

Note: The following maps are located at the end of this chapter: Perspective C: Neighborhood Access to Trails, Resource Map C: Parks and Recreational Trail Recommendations, and Resource Map E: Trailsheds – Trail Access to Community Facilities.

T.1 GOAL: Ensure access and connectivity to parks, recreation, open space, neighborhoods, and activity centers within Erie.

Strategies:

T.1.1. Utilize the *Resource Map C: Parks and Recreational Trail Recommendations* to guide trail planning and design efforts.

Action:

- A. Develop an overall master plan for the spine trail network to clarify desired alignments, potential land acquisitions needed and the cost and timing for implementation.
- T.1.2. Require new developments to provide trails that tie into existing or future trails.

Actions:

- A. Adopt the *Trail Design Standards* (provided in this chapter) as part of Town of Erie *Park Construction Standards and Specifications for Design and Construction of Public Improvements*.
- B. Amend the *Municipal Code, Title 10* to specify trail ownership, design, construction, and maintenance requirements of different trail types.
- C. Include language in development agreements to conform with the trail requirements set forth in the *Municipal Code*, *Title 10*, as recommended above.
- T.1.3. Plan for trailheads for the Town's trail network.

Action:

- A. Identify and prioritize parks adjacent to existing or future trails that could be improved for parking, signage, wayfinding, and enhanced access. (See the Trailheads section under the *Trail Design Standards*.)
- T.1.4. Engage the OSTAB in conceptual trail planning efforts, particularly during the annual Boulder County request process.
- T.2 GOAL: Improve access to Regional Trails and neighboring communities.

Strategy:

T.2.1. Manage potential alignments and connection points at the Town limits to the Coal Creek/Rock Creek Trail, the St. Vrain Legacy Trail, Union Pacific Rail Trail, and Broomfield regional trails.

Actions:

- A. Coordinate planning efforts for regional trails with other agencies including Boulder County, Weld County, the City of Lafayette, the City of Broomfield, the Town of Dacono, the City of Longmont, and the Town of Frederick.
- B. Utilize the *Resource Map C: Parks and Recreational Trail Recommendations* to identify properties for regional trail alignments.
- C. Develop strategies to secure land for regional trail connections including easements, dedication, or acquisition as resources allow.

T.3 GOAL: Minimize the impact of trails to sensitive natural areas.

Strategies:

T.3.1. Develop and adopt a site-specific trail location strategy for Erie's natural areas to minimize impact to sensitive areas (in support of *Natural Areas Inventory* assessment, p. 77). See the *Protect & Restore Existing Features* section in this chapter for general guidelines.

Note: Refer to Chapter 7: Administration and Management for recommendations related to signage and community awareness of the Town's trail network.

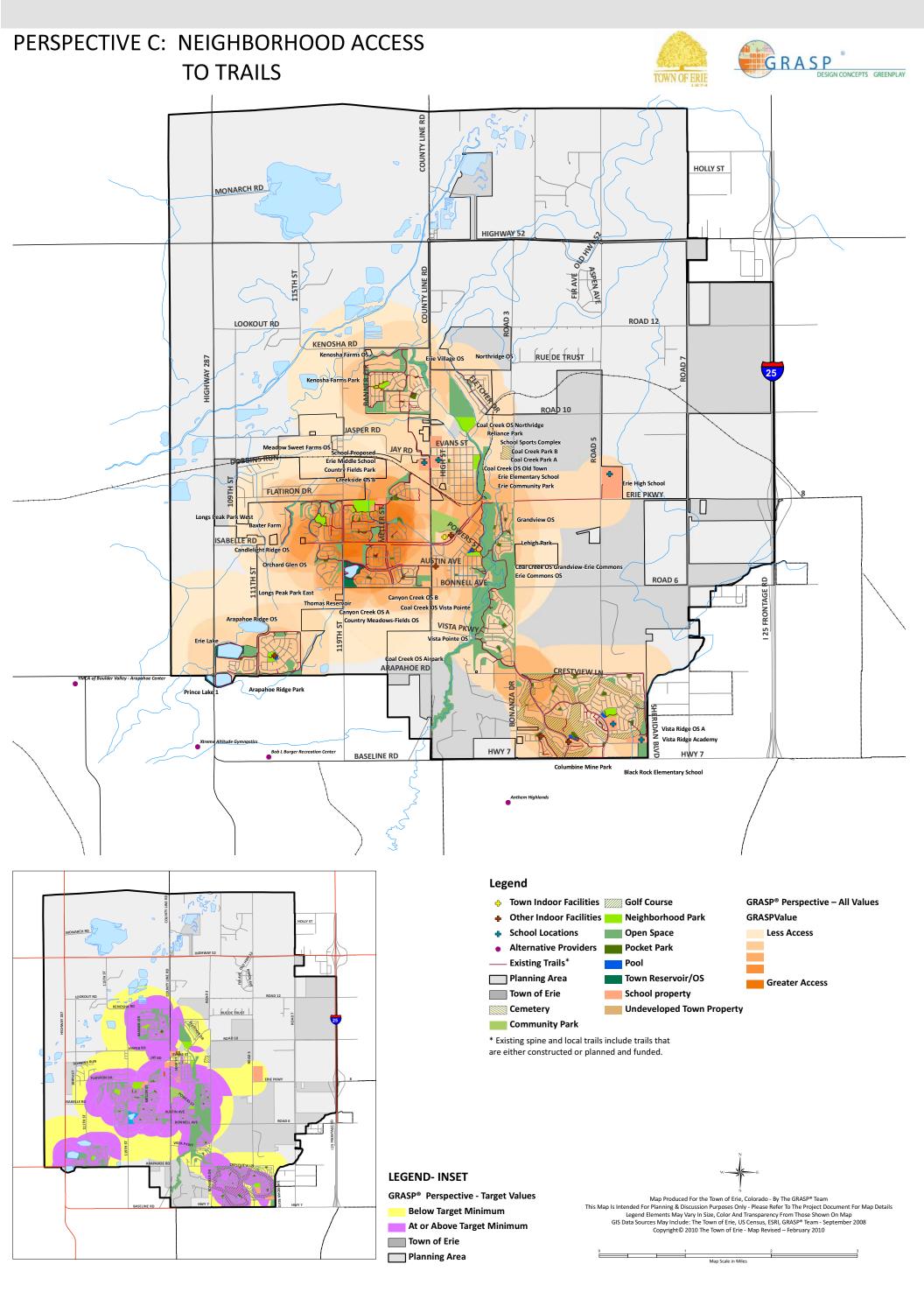
Perspective C: Neighborhood Access to Trails

Resource Map E: Trailshed – Trail Access to Community Facilities

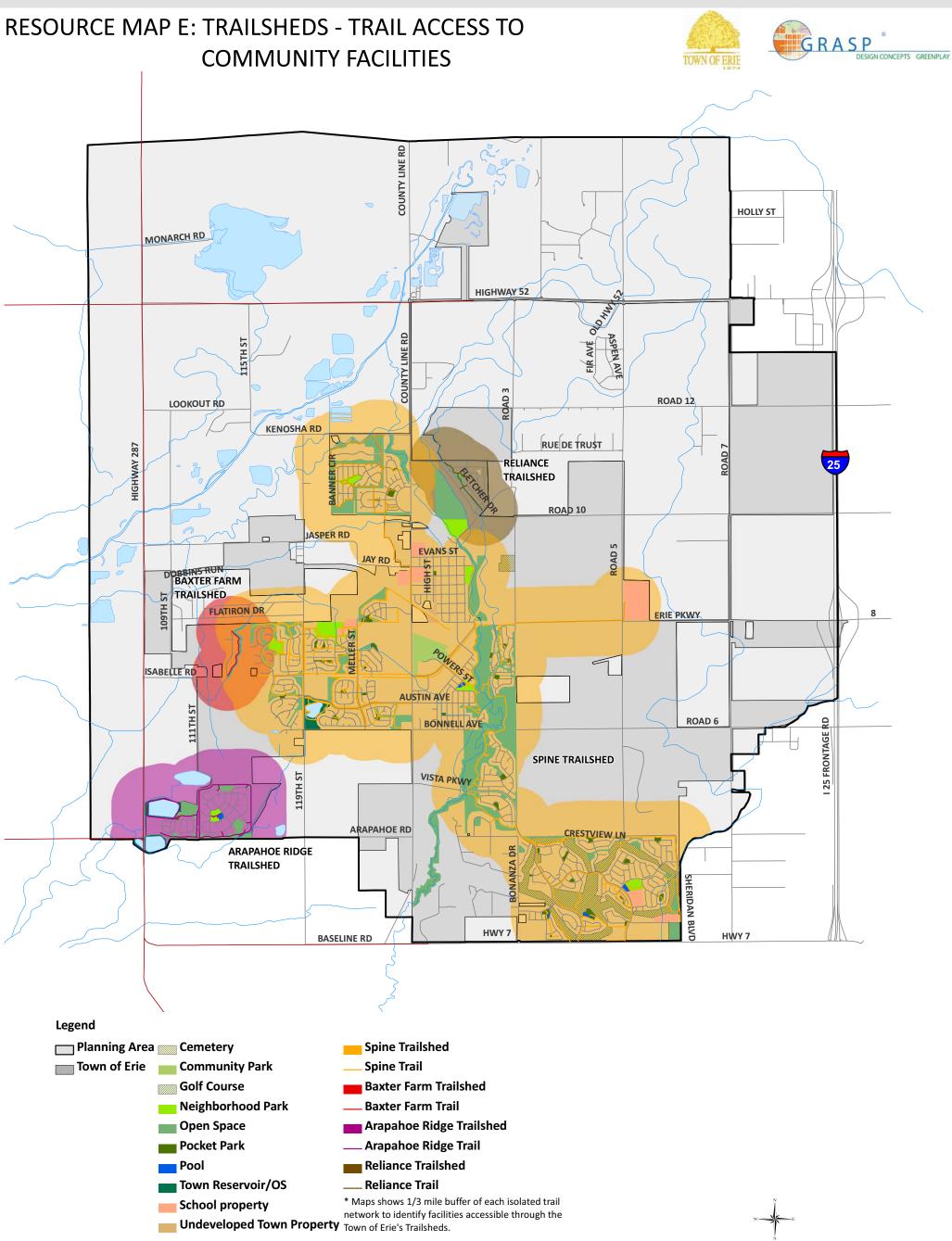
Resource Map C: Parks and Recreational Trails Recommendations



PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN



PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN



Map Produced For the Town of Erie, Colorado - By The GRASP® Team

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Map Scale in Miles

* Existing spine and local trails include trails that

are either constructed or planned and funded.

the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Map.

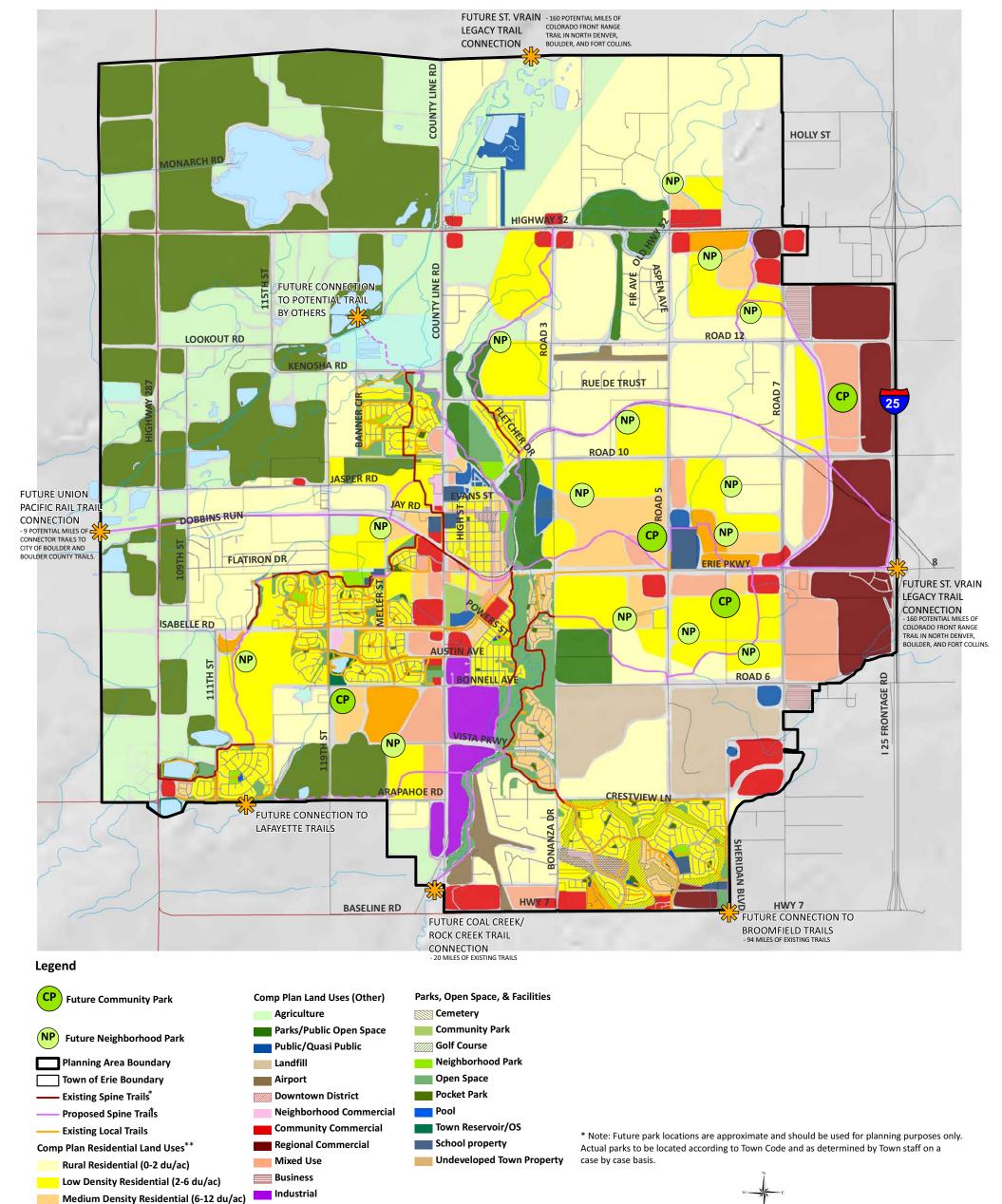
** Land Use symbols and densities are taken from

PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

RESOURCE MAP C: PARKS AND RECREATIONAL TRAILS RECOMMENDATIONS







Scale in Miles

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"Parks Recommendations" Map

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